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During the past week 2 persons were taken off the trains from Mexico, having come from Vera Cruz and Tampico respectively. It has always been my endeavor to prevent the entrance of people from infected districts into this country. I can do this easily with foreigners, but with American citizens it is a different matter. The Americans state that if they are detained here they should have their expenses (living) defrayed and be properly taken care of. The State health officer, here has been expecting for a long time to get a house of detention for these people, but as yet nothing has been done by the State of Texas. I am doing all in my power to prevent the entrance of smallpox, and never hesitate in the matter of keeping it out of here. I make it a point to keep myself posted as to the condition of all the Mexican towns on the Rio Grande, and I personally inspect these towns.

Very respectfully,

LEO HUME,

Acting Assistant Surgeon, U. S. M. H. S.

Galveston.—Acting Assistant Surgeon Keiller reports 8 new cases during the week ended April 22, making a total of 25 cases. All colored, with no deaths.

VIRGINIA.

Newport News.—Acting Assistant Surgeon Charles reports as follows: April 25, no new cases; April 26, 2 new cases; April 27, no new cases; April 28, 1 new case; April 29, no new cases; April 30, no new cases; 12 deaths in city and county since January 1, 1899.

Norfolk.—Assistant Surgeon Cumming reports as follows: April 25, admitted 2 cases, discharged 7 cases; April 26, no new cases; April 27, 6 new cases; April 28, admitted 2 cases, discharged, 5; deaths, 1.

Portsmouth.—Assistant Surgeon Cumming reports as follows: April 25, admitted 3 cases, discharged 5 cases; April 26, 6 cases; April 27, no new cases; April 28, admitted, 7; discharged, 1.

Report of smallpox epidemic in Alexandria, Va.

ALEXANDRIA, VA., *April 30, 1899.*

SIR: I have the honor to send the following report of the smallpox epidemic in Alexandria: The first case was reported December 27, 1898, and was thought to have been contracted from a shipment of rags from Norfolk, Va. This was disproved later, and it is now thought there were 2 cases here the last week in November. The second case was reported December 29. On January 24 there were 21 cases, and on the 28th, 47 cases. The daily increase from January 28 until February 11, was from 5 to 19 cases, making a total February 11 of 213, the number growing until 352 cases had been reported—47 whites, 305 blacks, with 5 deaths—all black—9 confluent and none hemorrhagic. Number sent to the pesthouse, 21.

The history of the epidemic is interesting, first, because of the mild type of the disease, which was early mistaken for chicken pox, and secondly, because the health officer was handicapped by the municipal authorities, who misled the public by stating in the proceedings of their council there was no smallpox in the city, hoping by concealment to meet the approbation of the wholesale merchants, not knowing the inevitable outcome of such a course is the wide spreading of so contagious a disease. Even after the mayor had requested you to send an

expert here, and Dr. Rosenau had pronounced every one of the 19 cases he saw smallpox; there were articles published in the daily press denouncing physicians who advocated compulsory vaccination and closing the public schools and places of amusement as "calamity howlers." The authorities finally had a house-to-house inspection, *without* vaccination, which unearthed a few cases. The differences between the mayor and the health officer were now so great that the council appointed a committee of 5 to look into the matter, examine witnesses, and make a report. A report (unanimous) from the committee for compulsory vaccination was defeated by a unanimous vote in the council, the committee without exception voting against its own report. The mayor then had 4 policemen vaccinate the indigent who made no objection. The health officer, with the concurrence of the board of health, made a contract with 6 physicians to make a reinspection and vaccinate those willing at the city's expense. A new pesthouse was now built, in which 1 patient was put, thereby rendering it unfit for use as a house of detention, which had been urged. Patients, though indigent, were allowed to remain where found, instead of isolating them from the inmates of their homes, and the whole family fed at the corporation's expense. In one instance, where a case of varioloid had recovered, the mayor advised the head of the house to forcibly eject the fumigator if sent there by the health officer. This resulted in the house never being disinfected.

The quarantine was a farce, inmates of flagged houses coming and going at will, and I saw a smallpox patient putting away coal dumped at his front door at the expense of the city, and it was no uncommon sight to see them at their windows and doors. After the reinspection and vaccination (about 10,000 vaccinations, this estimate made on the number of vaccine tubes sold by druggists) there was a marked decrease. At this date there is 1 convalescent to be discharged in a few days.

By your order, January 26, an inspection by 7 physicians of all trains, steam and electric, and boats going to Washington was put on, and the good accomplished will be seen when my reports show 1 man removed from the electric train died at the pesthouse two days after, another man found traveling between Washington and Alexandria sent to the pesthouse. In all, some 30 suspects and persons known to have been in contact with the disease were prevented from traveling, and innumerable baskets and bundles of soiled laundry were prohibited from going to Washington.

Yours, respectfully,

ARTHUR SNOWDEN,
Sanitary Inspector, U. S. M. H. S.

The SUPERVISING SURGEON-GENERAL,
U. S. Marine-Hospital Service.